

Influence of Fashion Addiction on the Academic Performance among Ambrose Alli University Students

By

POLYCARP I. AGWEDA

Department of Guidance and Counseling, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma
agwedapolycarp@aauekpoma.edu.ng, 08038722856

Abstract

This study investigates the influence of fashion addiction on the academic performance among undergraduate students at Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State. Four key objectives were explored: determining the prevalence of fashion addiction among students, identifying socio-cultural factors contributing to fashion addiction, examining the effects of fashion addiction on academic performance, and establishing the relationship between fashion addiction and students' academic achievement. Data were collected from undergraduate students through a survey questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The statistical analysis using Pearson Product Moment Correlation revealed a significant negative relationship between fashion addiction and academic performance, with the null hypothesis rejected at 0.05 level of significance. The findings were that the research identified fashion addiction as prevalent among students indicating that fashion-related behaviours form a significant part of students' daily lives. Socio-cultural factors such as peer pressure, social media influence, and family background were found to contribute to fashion addiction. These factors play a major role in shaping fashion-related consumption behaviors among students. In terms of academic impact, the study revealed that fashion addiction negatively affects academic performance of the students. Students experiencing fashion addiction demonstrated reduced study time, increased distraction during lectures, poor time management, and financial pressure arising from excessive spending on clothing and accessories. It was concluded that fashion addiction is present among undergraduate students and it is strongly influenced by peer pressure and continuous exposure to social media content. It was therefore recommended among others that institutional sensitization programs, structured counselling interventions for behavioral addiction management, workshops on responsible social media use, financial literacy training, and closer monitoring of students' academic engagement by advisers.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Behavioural Addiction, Fashion Addiction, Peer Pressure, Social Media Influence, Undergraduate Students.

Introduction

Fashion plays a significant role in self-expression and social identity among students in tertiary institutions worldwide. However, there is a growing concern about fashion addiction, which refers to a compulsive and excessive preoccupation with fashion trends, clothing, and appearance that can interfere with academic and personal responsibilities (adapted from behavioral addiction literature). Among Nigerian university students, especially

undergraduates, fashion addiction manifests as an obsessive focus on maintaining trendy appearances, often at the expense of academic diligence and financial prudence (Sapientia Foundation Journal of Education, Sciences and Gender Studies, 2022).

The contemporary university environment has witnessed unprecedented exposure to fashion trends through multiple channels. The rise of social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and Facebook, combined with celebrity influence and globalization, has intensified exposure to fashion trends, fueling compulsive behaviours related to fashion consumption (Uzuegbunam, 2017). These digital platforms provide constant streams of fashion content, creating an environment where appearance comparisons and materialistic values are continuously reinforced. Students are exposed to curated images of fashionable lifestyles, often leading to unrealistic expectations about their own appearance standards and consumption patterns.

Peer pressure and the desire for social acceptance further reinforce these behaviours, making it challenging for students to balance their fashion interests with academic commitments (Kwanuba, Sababa & Filgona, 2020). In the Nigerian university context, where communal values and social hierarchies are particularly emphasized, students often use fashion as a means of signaling social status, group membership, and personal identity. The pressure to maintain certain appearance standards can be intense, particularly for students navigating the transition to independence and establishing their social positions within university communities.

In Nigerian tertiary institutions, fashion addiction has been empirically linked to various academic challenges including distractions in academic activities, absenteeism, reduced concentration during lectures, and poor academic performance as measured by Grade Point Average (GPA) and continuous assessment scores (Ojogbane, Amonjenu & Hussein, 2020; Bashorun et al., 2023). Students who prioritize fashion over academic responsibilities often experience time management difficulties, spending excessive hours browsing online stores, shopping in physical retail locations, planning outfits, and maintaining fashionable appearances. This time investment directly reduces the hours available for studying, completing assignments, and engaging in other academically productive activities.

Additionally, the financial burden of sustaining a fashionable lifestyle can lead to significant stress and may compel students to engage in risky behaviours. Research has

documented cases where students facing financial strain due to excessive fashion spending have become involved in cultism, commercial sex work, or transactional relationships as means of funding their fashion consumption (Gbedegbe & Quashie, 2013). These risky behaviours not only pose immediate dangers to students' physical and psychological wellbeing but also create additional stressors that further undermine academic focus and performance.

Despite efforts by universities to regulate student dressing through dress codes, awareness programs, and disciplinary measures, the compulsive nature of fashion addiction requires more nuanced and comprehensive interventions (Sapientia Foundation Journal of Education, Sciences and Gender Studies, 2022). Traditional regulatory approaches that focus solely on external compliance with dress standards may fail to address the underlying psychological, social, and emotional factors that drive addictive fashion behaviours. Effective interventions must recognize fashion addiction as a behavioural addiction requiring multifaceted approaches that include counselling, financial literacy education, peer support programs, and strategies that help students develop healthier relationships with fashion and consumption.

Understanding the prevalence, causes, and academic consequences of fashion addiction is essential for developing effective strategies that support students' wellbeing and academic success. This study contributes to this understanding by providing empirical data on fashion addiction among students at Ambrose Alli University, examining the socio-cultural factors that contribute to its development, and investigating its specific impacts on academic performance outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

The rise of fashion addiction among students in Nigerian tertiary institutions poses significant challenges to academic performance and student welfare. Many students prioritize fashion trends and appearance over their studies, leading to poor time management, reduced concentration in lectures and study sessions, and lower academic grades as reflected in GPA scores and continuous assessment results (Gbedegbe & Quashie, 2013; Ojogbane et al., 2020). The problem manifests in multiple dimensions. First, students experiencing fashion addiction often allocate disproportionate amounts of time to fashion-related activities. This includes browsing fashion content on social media, shopping online or in physical stores, researching fashion trends, planning daily outfits, and maintaining appearances through grooming and

styling activities. Time devoted to these pursuits directly reduces the time available for academic preparation, studying for examinations, completing coursework, and participating in educationally enriching activities. Second, fashion addiction often results in financial strain due to excessive spending on clothing, shoes, accessories, and beauty products, which can cause stress and distract students from their academic goals. Students may accumulate credit card debt, borrow money from family and friends, or divert funds intended for educational expenses such as textbooks, research materials, or tuition payments toward fashion purchases. The resulting financial anxiety creates cognitive burden that interferes with students' ability to concentrate on academic work, reducing learning efficiency and academic performance.

Third, the compulsive nature of this addiction may expose students to negative peer influences and risky behaviours that further undermine their academic progress (Bashorun et al., 2023; Sapientia Foundation Journal of Education, Sciences and Gender Studies, 2022). Students facing financial difficulties due to fashion spending may feel pressured to engage in income-generating activities that conflict with academic responsibilities or, in more severe cases, may become involved in risky behaviours to support their fashion consumption. These circumstances create additional psychological distress and life complications that further interfere with academic focus and success.

This study aims to fill this gap by investigating the impact of fashion addiction on the academic performance of undergraduate students at Ambrose Alli University (AAU), Ekpoma, Edo State, providing evidence-based insights to inform policy development and student support services.

Purpose of the study

The aim of this research is to examine the impact of fashion addiction on the academic performance of undergraduate students at Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma. In order to achieve its aim, the objectives of the study are, to:

1. Examine the prevalence of fashion addiction among undergraduate students at Ambrose Alli University;
2. Assess the impact of fashion addiction on students' academic performance as measured by Grade Point Average (GPA), and
3. Explore coping strategies and preventive measures that students can adopt to manage or reduce the negative impact of fashion addiction on academic performance.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide this study:

1. What is the prevalence of fashion addiction among undergraduate students at Ambrose Alli University?
2. What are the socio-cultural factors that contribute to fashion addiction among students at Ambrose Alli University?
3. What coping strategies can be adopted by students to manage or reduce fashion addiction among Student?

Design of the Study

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. A descriptive survey is used to collect information from a population without manipulating the study variables. It allows the researcher to obtain data directly from respondents in their natural environment through structured questionnaires (Creswell, 2014). This design was considered appropriate because the researcher did not manipulate fashion addiction, socio-cultural factors, or academic performance. Data were collected from Ambrose Alli University students and analysed to draw inferences about their natural behaviours and experiences.

Population of the Study

The population of the study covered all undergraduate students at Ambrose Alli University (AAU), Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria, during the 2024-2025 academic session. According to the university's registry, AAU has 15,000 undergraduate students distributed across all the faculties in the main campus. These faculties are: Agriculture, Arts, Education, Engineering, Environmental Studies, Law, Life Science, Management Sciences, Physical Sciences, and Social Sciences. These students represent diverse socioeconomic, cultural, and geographical backgrounds from across Nigeria.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The multi-stage sampling technique was used to select participants for this study. In the first stage, a stratified random sampling approach was employed to ensure representation across all eight faculties at Ambrose Alli University. In the second stage, simple random sampling was used to select two departments within each faculty. Finally, a proportionate sampling technique was applied to select students from different academic levels (100 level to 500 level) within the chosen departments.

A sample size of 200 undergraduate students was determined using Taro Yamane's formula for sample size calculation at 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. The sample was distributed proportionally across the eight faculties based on their student population. However, out of the 200 questionnaires distributed, 189 were successfully completed and returned, representing a response rate of 94.5%. These 189 questionnaires were used for data analysis.

Instrument of the Study

The instrument that was used for the collection of data is a questionnaire developed by the researcher. The instrument was titled: Fashion Addiction and Academic Performance Questionnaire (FAAPQ). The instrument was divided into Sections A, B, C, and D.

Section A contains information on the demographic data of students including gender, age, faculty, level of study, and family socioeconomic background. This section also collected information on students' current Grade Point Average (GPA) range, which served as a key indicator of academic performance.

Section B contains 10 item statements measuring the prevalence and manifestations of fashion addiction among students. The items assess behaviours such as: preoccupation with fashion trends, excessive time spent on fashion-related activities (shopping, browsing fashion content, planning outfits), inability to control fashion spending, prioritizing fashion purchases over essential needs, and experiencing distress when unable to engage in fashion activities. Each of the items was rated on a five-point Likert scale type: Strongly Agree - 5; Agree - 4; Undecided - 3; Disagree - 2 and Strongly Disagree - 1.

Section C contains 20 item statements measuring socio-cultural factors contributing to fashion addiction. These items are grouped into four sub-scales: peer pressure and social conformity (items 1-5), media and celebrity influence (items 6-10), family socioeconomic background (items 11-15), and effects of globalization and social media (items 16-20). Each of the items was rated on a five-point Likert scale type: Strongly Agree - 5; Agree - 4; Undecided - 3; Disagree - 2 and Strongly Disagree - 1.

Section D contains 15 item statements measuring the effects of fashion addiction on academic performance. These items assess: time management challenges and reduced study hours (items 1-5), financial stress affecting concentration (items 6-10), and classroom distraction and reduced academic engagement (items 11-15). Each of the items was rated on a

five-point Likert scale type: Strongly Agree - 5; Agree - 4; Undecided – 3; Disagree - 2 and Strongly Disagree - 1.

Validity of the Instrument

The questionnaire's face and content validity were established by the a measurement expert in the Department of Guidance and Counselling, Ambrose Alli University. She examined the instrument to determine its clarity, relevance, and adequacy in measuring fashion addiction, socio-cultural factors, and academic performance. Necessary corrections and adjustments suggested by the supervisor were incorporated before the final draft was produced.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was determined using the test-retest method. The questionnaire was administered to a group of 30 undergraduate students from the University of Benin, who were not part of the main study but shared similar characteristics with the target population. Two weeks later, the same instrument was administered to the same group. The responses from both administrations were correlated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation formula. The reliability coefficients obtained were 0.81 for Section B, 0.79 for Section C, and 0.83 for Section D. These values indicated that the instrument was reliable and consistent, as coefficients above 0.70 are generally considered acceptable in educational research.

Administration of the Instrument

The questionnaire was administered electronically through Google Forms. The researcher converted the validated questionnaire into digital format and generated a shareable link. The link was distributed through WhatsApp platforms, including faculty and departmental WhatsApp groups, class group chats, and association groups. Class representatives and faculty student leaders assisted in forwarding the link to ensure wide coverage. An introductory note accompanied the form, explaining the purpose of the study, assuring respondents of confidentiality, and emphasizing voluntary participation. The “limit to one response” feature on Google Forms was enabled to prevent multiple entries from the same student. The electronic method allowed for easy data compilation and minimized errors associated with manual distribution.

Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. Specifically, mean item score (MIS) were employed to address the objectives of the study.

Mean Item Score (MIS) is a descriptive statistical measure used to assess the average level of responses across a set of items. It is calculated by summing the scores for all individual items and dividing by the total number of items.

Where:

n_1 = number of respondents who chose 'Strongly Disagree'

n_2 = number of respondents who chose 'Disagree'

n_3 = number of respondents who chose 'Undecided'

n_4 = number of respondents who chose 'Agree'

n_5 = number of respondents who chose 'Strongly Agree'

N = total number of respondents for that item

Data Analysis

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the respondents were analyzed based on gender, age, faculty, level of study, and current Grade Point Average (GPA). These variables provide background information on the respondents and help in understanding the composition of the study sample. The gender distribution of respondents shows that female students were more represented in the study, with 113 respondents (59.8%), while male students accounted for 76 respondents (40.2%).

The age distribution reveals that the majority of respondents were within the age range of 21–25 years, representing 102 respondents (54.0%), followed by those aged 16–20 years with 68 respondents (36.0%). Respondents aged 26–30 years and above 30 years accounted for 15 (7.9%) and 4 (2.1%) respectively.

Faculty distribution indicates that Management Sciences had the highest number of respondents with 35 (18.5%), while Law recorded the least with 15 respondents (7.9%).

The level of study distribution shows that 200 Level students were the most represented with 51 respondents (27.0%), while 500 Level students were the least represented with 4 respondents (2.1%). The GPA distribution reveals that most respondents were within the

Second Class Upper and Second Class Lower categories, accounting for 78 (41.3%) and 76 (40.2%) respondents respectively.

Table 1.1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Category	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	76	40
	Female	113	60
	Total	189	100
Age	16-20 years	68	36
	21-25 years	102	54
	26-30 years	15	8
	Above 30 years	4	2
	Total	189	100
Faculty	Arts	19	10
	Education	28	15
	Engineering	21	11
	Environmental Sciences	18	10
	Law	15	8
	Management Sciences	35	19
	Life Sciences	26	14
	Social Sciences	27	14
	Total	189	100
Level of Study	100 Level	42	22
	200 Level	51	27
	300 Level	48	25
	400 Level	44	23
	500 Level	4	2
	Total	189	100
Current GPA	4.50-5.00 (First Class)	2	1
	3.50-4.49 (Second Class Upper)	78	41
	2.50-3.49 (Second Class Lower)	76	40
	1.50-2.49 (Third Class)	28	15
	Below 1.50 (Pass)	5	3
	Total	189	100

Prevalence of fashion addiction among undergraduate students at Ambrose Alli University?

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements on fashion addiction behaviors using a five-point Likert scale: 1 – Strongly Disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Undecided, 4 – Agree, 5 – Strongly Agree. The criterion mean is 3.00.

Table 1.2: Prevalence of Fashion Addiction Among Undergraduate Students

Items	Mean	Rank
I buy clothes I don't need because they're trendy	3.91	1
I constantly think about fashion trends and new style	3.87	2
I feel uncomfortable repeating an outfit in public	3.78	3
Buying fashionable items improves my mood	3.85	4
I feel incomplete when I'm not dressed fashionably	3.69	5
I struggle to control my urge to buy fashion items	3.65	6
I judge others based on how fashionable they dress	3.59	7
I feel anxious when I cannot shop for new clothes	3.52	8
I have borrowed money to buy fashion items	3.48	9
I prioritize clothes over essentials like textbooks	3.42	10
Grand mean	3.74	

The analysis revealed a grand mean score of 3.74, which is above the benchmark mean of 3.00, indicating that fashion addiction is prevalent among undergraduate students of Ambrose Alli University. The highest-ranked item was “I buy clothes I don’t need because they are trendy” (Mean = 3.91), followed by “I constantly think about fashion trends and new styles” (Mean = 3.87). The lowest-ranked item was “I prioritize clothes over essentials like textbooks” (Mean = 3.42), although it still exceeded the criterion mean. Overall, the result confirms the prevalence of fashion addiction among AAU students.

Socio-cultural factors that contribute to fashion addiction among students at Ambrose Alli University,. Ekpoma

Respondents indicated their level of agreement with statements non socio-cultural factors using a five-point Likert scale.

Table 1.3: Socio-Cultural Factors Contributing to Fashion Addiction

Items	Mean	Rank
My friends influence my fashion choices.	4.12	1
Social media increases my urge to buy clothes.	4.05	2
My family's financial status affects my fashion spending.	4.02	3
I worry about being judged if I'm not well-dressed.	3.91	4

I use Instagram/TikTok to keep up with trends.	3.88	5
Globalization makes me more conscious of appearance.	3.88	5
Online shopping leads to impulsive buying.	3.84	7
I follow fashion influencers online.	3.82	8
I feel pressured to dress fashionably to fit in.	3.78	9
My family expects me to maintain a dress standard.	3.77	10
Advertisements influence my fashion purchases.	3.75	11
I imitate the fashion styles of celebrities.	3.72	12
International fashion trends increase my spending.	3.69	13
My social status depends on how I dress.	3.68	14
My parents encourage me to dress fashionably.	3.65	15
I experience FOMO with new fashion trends.	3.64	16
I receive financial support for fashion items.	3.58	17
I compete with friends to have fashionable outfits.	3.54	18
Fashion was emphasized while growing up.	3.52	19
I feel inadequate compared to celebrities' wardrobes.	3.49	20
Grand mean	3.77	

Findings showed a grand mean score of 3.77, indicating that socio-cultural factors significantly contribute to fashion addiction among undergraduate students of Ambrose Alli University. The highest-ranked factor was “My friends influence my fashion choices” (Mean = 4.12), followed by “Social media increases my urge to buy clothes” (Mean = 4.05) and “My family’s financial status affects my fashion spending” (Mean = 4.02). The lowest-ranked item was “I feel inadequate compared to celebrities’ wardrobes” (Mean = 3.49), although it still exceeded the benchmark mean. Overall, the result confirms that socio-cultural factors play a significant role in promoting fashion addiction among AAU students.

Effects of Fashion Addiction on Academic Performance of Undergraduate students at Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma.

Respondents indicated their level of agreement with statements on how fashion addiction affects their academic performance.

Table 1.4: Effects of Fashion Addiction on Academic Performance

Items	Mean	Rank
Fashion addiction has affected my overall performance	3.92	1
Fashion interest reduces motivation to excel academically	3.85	2
Thinking about Fashion distracts me while studying	3.82	3
Financial stress reduces my Academic focus	3.79	4
Shopping reduces my study time	3.75	5
Appearance worries reduce my participation	3.74	6
Fashion expenses affect my academic performance	3.71	7
I compare outfits during lectures instead of listening	3.69	8
I spend more time on fashion than studying	3.68	9
I browse fashion sites during lectures	3.66	10
Fashion-related debt affects my concentration	3.64	11
I arrive late to class due to dressing time	3.58	12
I have missed deadlines due to Fashion activities	3.52	13
I have used Textbook money to buy clothes	3.48	14
I have borrowed money to buy Fashion items	3.45	15
Grand mean	3.77	

The analysis produced a grand mean score of 3.69, indicating that fashion addiction negatively affects the academic performance of students at Ambrose Alli University. The highest-ranked item was “Fashion addiction has affected my overall performance” (Mean = 3.92), followed by “Fashion interest reduces motivation to excel academically” (Mean = 3.85) and “Thinking about fashion distracts me while studying” (Mean = 3.82). The lowest-ranked items were “I have borrowed money to buy fashion items” (Mean = 3.45), “I have used textbook money to buy clothes” (Mean = 3.48), and “I have missed deadlines due to fashion activities” (Mean = 3.52). Although these were the lowest, they still exceeded the criterion mean, indicating that fashion addiction negatively influences students’ academic performance.

Coping Strategies Adopted by Students to Manage Fashion Addiction

Responses to this research question were obtained from the open-ended section of the questionnaire. Analysis of the responses revealed several coping strategies adopted by students

to manage fashion addiction. The most frequently suggested strategy was setting a monthly budget for fashion expenses (142 respondents, 75.1%), followed by prioritizing academic needs over fashion wants (136 respondents, 72.0%) and limiting time spent on social media and fashion-related content (128 respondents, 67.7%). Other suggested strategies include developing self-control and discipline (118 respondents, 62.4%), focusing on academic goals (112 respondents, 59.3%), and buying clothes only when necessary (108 respondents, 57.1%). Overall, the responses indicate that students adopt financial discipline and time management strategies to reduce the effects of fashion addiction on their academic performance.

Discussion of Findings

Prevalence of Fashion Addiction among Undergraduate Students

The findings of the study revealed that fashion addiction is prevalent among undergraduate students of Ambrose Alli University, with a grand mean score of 3.74. This finding is consistent with earlier studies which reported high levels of fashion consciousness and compulsive buying behaviors among Nigerian university students. The result suggests that fashion-related behaviors form a significant part of students' daily lives.

Socio-Cultural Factors Contributing to Fashion Addiction

The study found that socio-cultural factors significantly contribute to fashion addiction among undergraduate students, with a grand mean score of 3.77. This aligns with previous studies which emphasized the influence of peer groups, social media, and family background on students' fashion behaviors. The result indicates that external social influences play a major role in shaping fashion-related consumption among students.

Effects of Fashion Addiction on Academic Performance

The findings revealed that fashion addiction negatively affects the academic performance of undergraduate students of Ambrose Alli University, with a grand mean score of 3.69. This supports earlier studies which found that excessive involvement in fashion-related activities reduces study time, increases distraction, and creates financial stress among students, thereby hindering academic performance.

Coping Strategies Adopted by Students

The coping strategies identified by students include setting monthly budgets for fashion expenses, prioritizing academic needs over fashion wants, and limiting time spent on social media and fashion-related content. These strategies indicate that students are aware of practical

ways to manage fashion addiction and reduce its negative effects on their academic performance.

Summary of Findings

The study investigated the prevalence of fashion addiction among undergraduate students, the factors responsible for it, its effect on academic performance, and the relationship between fashion addiction and students' academic achievement. The findings revealed that fashion addiction exists among students at a noticeable level. A good number of students showed strong concern for fashion trends, appearance, and keeping up with styles seen on social media. Although not all students demonstrated extreme addictive behaviour, many admitted that fashion occupies a significant part of their attention. The study further revealed that peer pressure and social media exposure are the major factors influencing fashion addiction. Celebrity lifestyle and socio-economic background were also found to contribute. Social media platforms continuously expose students to trending fashion content, which increases comparison and the desire to conform.

In terms of academic performance, the findings showed that excessive involvement in fashion-related activities reduces study time and affects concentration during lectures. Many students who showed high interest in fashion also reported poor time management and financial pressure due to frequent spending on clothes and accessories. These factors were found to negatively influence their academic performance. The hypothesis tested indicated a significant relationship between fashion addiction and academic performance. The null hypothesis was rejected, confirming that fashion addiction significantly influences students' academic outcomes.

Conclusion

The paper concluded that fashion addiction is prevalence among undergraduate students and it is strongly influenced by peer pressure and continuous exposure to social media content.

Recommendations

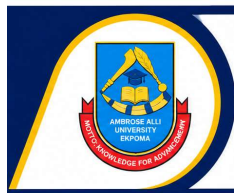
Based on the findings, the paper therefore recommends that:

1. the management of Ambrose Alli University should organize regular sensitization programmes to create awareness about the academic implications of excessive fashion involvement;
2. the university counselling unit should develop structured intervention programmes that address behavioural addiction, time management, and self-discipline;

3. workshops on responsible use of social media should be introduced to help students manage exposure to trends and reduce unhealthy comparison;
4. Financial literacy programmes should be organized to guide students on proper budgeting and responsible spending; and
5. academic advisers should monitor students' academic engagement more closely and provide early support to those whose academic performance may be affected by lifestyle distraction

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